

VZCZCXRO3835  
OO RUEHROV  
DE RUEHJM #0820/01 1350831  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 140831Z MAY 08  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1507  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEADWD/DA WASHINGTON DC//DAS-ZD/DACS-ZK//  
RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//  
RHMFIUU/CMC WASHINGTON DC  
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 7114  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4101  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3954  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 5452  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 3870  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2432

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000820

SIPDIS

STATE PASS BBG  
STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR ABRAMS  
CMC WASHINGTON DC FOR POLAD

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON FOR HKANONA AND POL - TSOU  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAO](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (5/14): CONTRASTING ISRAELI  
CELEBRATIONS AND NAKBA COMMEMORATIONS

-----  
Main Stories:  
-----

The dailies report that Bush is coming to the Middle East with low expectations of reaching an agreement. Papers highlight Secretary Rice remarks that, "chances for reaching a peace agreement are not great." Related coverage on Al-Quds' front page quotes Palestinian President Abbas' spokesperson Nimir Hamad suggesting that a tri-lateral meeting between the U.S., Egypt and the Palestinians in Sharm Al-Sheik may be held next week. Al-Quds also quotes head Palestinian Authority negotiator Ahmad Quray from his May 13 visit to Hebron that negotiations with Israel are "difficult." In contrast, other Al-Quds reporting highlights comments by Israeli Premier Olmert that, "important understandings between Israel and the Palestinians have been reached."

All front pages lead with photos and reports on the May 13 visit by Palestinian President Abbas to the "Camp of Return" in Ramallah. The camp was set up to provide a venue for events commemorating the catastrophe or Al Nakba. All dailies highlight comments by Palestinian Prime Minister Fayyad from a May 13 speech in Ramallah where he asks the rhetorical question, "How can Israelis celebrate while our people are suffering from the crimes of your settlers?"

Comments by Quartet envoy Tony Blair's May 13 press conference appear in positive stories run on all front pages. Blair stated that some Israeli checkpoints will be removed in the coming months and that a number of development projects will soon begin in the Palestinian Territories.

According to the front pages of the dailies, representatives of Palestinian factions will be invited to Egypt next week to discuss

"the zero hour," or definitive date for implementation of a Palestinian truce with Israel. The dailies also cite an Israeli T.V report that there is a "possibility" that Israel will accept a truce.

The May 13 visit of Palestinian Interior Minister Al-Yahya to the West Bank city of Janin is given positive spin on an inside page of Al Quds. The paper reports that Al-Yahya stressed Palestinian Authority determination to make the security campaign "hope and smile" a success. During his visit to Janin, Al-Yahya met with Palestinian Authority security officials and spoke of the role of Israel in on-going security efforts. "Israel has adopted the same policy as it did in Nablus," Al-Yahya stated, alluding to frequent incursions into the two cities that undermine the efforts of Palestinian security forces.

Al-Quds reports on an inside page that the "Center for Jerusalem Studies" has called upon Arab, Palestinian and Muslim organizations to stop an Israeli plan to build a synagogue in the area of "Hamam Al-Ayn" in the Old City of Jerusalem.

-----  
BLOCK QUOTES:  
-----

11. Independent Al-Quds ran its daily editorial entitled "We suggest that Bush visit a refugee camp" (5/14): "Bush will arrive in Israel today to participate in the celebration of its founding... Other leaders and European presidents will follow him to the same

JERUSALEM 00000820 002 OF 002

celebration thereby making it an historic event. Meanwhile, everyone knows that the celebration that they are attending is the result of a catastrophe that Palestinians have been living through for sixty years. Logic dictates that any president or leader has the right to participate in any celebration they want... However, logic [also] suggests that [foreign participation in Israeli celebrations] will add too the complexity and sensitivity of what Bush and other leaders are trying to deliver [progress in peace efforts]..."

12. Independent Al-Ayyam carries an op-ed by veteran columnist Hani Habib entitled, "Who said that Israel is interested in a truce?" (5/14): "... The Jewish state has set [truce] conditions that involve... Gaza without involving the West Bank because, not only is Israeli policy predicated on fueling internal Palestinian division, but it also involves different Israeli political and military calculations for the West Bank and Gaza. All that we have witnessed shows that Israel is not interested in seriously considering Egyptian efforts for a truce. Therefore [Israel] continues to demand [unreasonable] conditions and offer justifications for why it cannot accept [Egyptian mediated proposals.] ..."

WALLES